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ABSTRACT

The Indian Nations At Risk Task Force commissioned 20 papers to review current conditions in Native American education and set forth rationale, plans, and strategies for action. This introduction to the commissioned papers describes the work of the Task Force. Comprised of 14 individuals, the Task Force met 5 times between May 1990 and May 1991 to exchange views, develop guiding principles, establish Native education goals, plan regional hearings and issues sessions, and draft the final report. The Task Force obtained public contributions of information and opinion through several means. Over 200 documents were received in response to a call for papers issued in the Federal Register. Hundreds of individuals presented testimony at regional hearings held in Juneau, Billings, Seattle, Phoenix, Oklahoma City, St. Paul, and Cherokee. Over 550 persons participated in 32 special issues sessions held during the 1990 National Indian Education Association Conference. Task Force members conducted 33 site visits across the United States to public schools, Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, tribally controlled schools, community colleges, and community education centers. Issues discussed at the regional hearings are summarized, including federal funding, teachers and teacher training, Native parent and community participation, integration of Native language and culture in the curriculum, financial aid for postsecondary education, postsecondary readiness and persistence, tribal colleges, minority faculty recruitment, support services for at-risk students, curriculum issues, government role, prejudice and racism, standards and testing, early childhood education, urban and public school education, adult basic education, special education, and data collection and research. (SV)

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# Indian Nations At Risk Task Force: Listen to the People

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Indian Nations At Risk Task Force

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## Purpose of the Supplemental Volume

This volume of commissioned papers is not another study about the plight of American Indians and Alaska Natives. The commissioned papers are about solutions to the problems facing Native education and, in fact, all American education. The purpose of these papers is to review current Native education and set forth rationale, plans, and strategies as an *Educational Strategy for Action for Indian Nations At Risk*.

This supplemental volume of commissioned papers is the primary product of the work of the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force. It is intended to serve specific needs of the Task Force and the broader needs of Native students, educators, legislators, and administrators involved in the education of Native people. These papers provided the Task Force with analyses of the current conditions and the knowledge and wisdom of hundreds of Native and non-Native practitioners and concerned people presented through testimony and submissions to the Task Force. It provided the expertise of professionals in the disciplines. The focus is on action to insure the highest quality enriched academic programs delivered in a Native cultural context. A context in which Native culture and language and the role and status of tribal society in the education of Natives are paramount.

A description of the process used by the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force in the development of the supplemental volume of commissioned papers and the Final Report follows.

## The Task Force

In order to determine solutions to the problems faced by American Indians/Alaska Natives in reaching their fullest potential, Education Secretary Lauro F. Cavazos established the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force on March 8, 1990. The Indian Nations At Risk Task Force was comprised of 14 individuals. The Task Force was chartered to summarize and make practical recommendations for action to be taken by educators, boards of education, public officials, state and local government, the federal government, affected tribes, parents, students, and others having a vital interest in the education of American Indians/Alaska Natives.

The Indian Nations At Risk Task Force was co-chaired by:

- **William Demmert, Jr.** (Tlingit/Sioux), Visiting Professor of Education at Stanford University and former Commissioner of Education for the State of Alaska, and
- **Terrel H. Bell**, noted lecturer and former United States Secretary of Education.

The other Task Force members were:

- **David L. Beaulieu** (Minnesota Chippewa), Minnesota Department of Education's Indian Education Manager;
- **Joseph H. Ely** (Paiute), Stetson Engineering, Inc.

and past Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Chair;

- **Byron F. Fullerton**, attorney and former Dean at Texas Tech School of Law;
- **Norbert S. Hill, Jr.** (Oneida), Executive Director for the American Indian Science and Engineering Society;
- **Hayes A. Lewis** (Zuni), Superintendent for Zuni Public School District;
- **Bob G. Martin** (Cherokee), President of Haskell Indian Junior College;
- **Janine Pease-Windy Boy** (Crow), President of Little Big Horn College;
- **Wilma Robinson** (Creek), Director of Tribal Development for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma;
- **Ivan L. Sidney** (Hopi), Assistant to the Executive Vice President of Northern Arizona University and former Hopi Tribal Chair;
- **Robert J. Swan** (Chippewa-Cree), Federal Projects Coordinator for Rocky



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Boy Schools and past President for the National Indian Education Association;

- **Eddie L. Tullis** (Creek), Tribal Chair of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians and Chair of the National Advisory Council on Indian Education; and
- **L. Lamar White** (Creek), Program Director for Instruction Technology, Florida Department of Education Technology Center.

The Task Force staff included: Executive Director, Alan Ginsburg; Project Director, G. Mike Charleston; Deputy Project Director, Gaye Leia King; Program Analyst, Nancy Loy; Administrative Officer, Manny Smith; and Secretary, Margie Lewis. Policy Studies Associates provided staff members Rosiland Hammar and Marjorie Weschler to assist with the summaries of Task Force meetings and hearings.

## The Task Force Meetings

The Task Force meetings were held in Washington, D.C. in May, 1990; Juneau, AK, in July, 1990; San Diego, CA, in October, 1990; Palo Alto, CA, in February, 1991; and Washington, D.C. in May 1991. These meetings were announced in the *Federal Register* and were open to the public.

At the first meeting, the Secretary of Education installed the Task Force members and gave a brief speech on the importance of the work to be accomplished. The Task Force then began exchanging views on Native education, developing the Guiding Principles, and establishing Native education goals. The Task Force also began discussing the contents of the Final Report.

In Juneau, the Task Force heard an overview of the BIA Mini-Summits on Indian Education, and discussed the process for developing the Final Report through a national call-for-papers, commissioned papers, regional hearings, and issues sessions to be conducted during the annual conference of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA).

After conducting issues sessions during the NIEA's annual conference held in San Diego, the Task Force reviewed and discussed the outline for the Final Report. Task Force members focused on the need to develop an "attention grabbing" report with "punch," as well as the timing of its release to the Secretary of Education and the public.

At the fourth business meeting at Stanford University, the Task Force discussed and developed the draft of the Final Report. Stanford professors met with the Task Force members and discussed issues related to language acquisition and accountability.

The Task Force met for their last time in May, 1991 to complete the final report. Staff began disseminating 10,000 copies of the Final Report to Native educators and parents, as well as to a broad audience of Congressional representives, state officials, federal agencies, national education associations, and private foundations. Commissioned papers of the Supplemental Volume were distributed to Native tribes and organizations, college and university libraries, and other key information clearinghouses.

## Contributions of the Public

The Task Force established serveral methods for obtaining public contributions of information, opinion, materials and testimony: A call-for-papers, public meetings, regional hearings, special issues sessions at the National Indian Education Conference, and site visits by the Task Force staff.

### *Call-For-Papers*

The Indian Nations At Risk Task Force issued a Notice that appeared in the *Federal Register* on July 20, 1990. The Notice invited the public to mail newly prepared or existing relevant papers and/or written testimony on American Indian/Alaska Native education issues directly to the Task Force offices. Over 200 documents were submitted by the public in response to the call-for-papers. These documents were reviewed and catalogued, and copies were distributed to the author of each relevant commissioned paper. The papers constituted a significant resource for use by the Task Force.

### *Regional Hearings*

The Task Force announced regional hearings in the *Federal Register*. One or more Task Force members and staff conducted the hearings throughout the United States: Juneau, AK; Billings, MT; Seattle, WA; Phoenix, AZ; Oklahoma City, OK; St. Paul, MN; and Cherokee, NC. The regional hearings were well attended with hundreds of individuals providing verbal and written testimony. Native and non-Native educators, administrators, government officials, parents, students, and scholars addressed the Task Force on a wide range of issues. Court reporters transcribe the hearings. Soon after each hearing, detailed notes of the proceedings were prepared and made available to all Task Force members and authors and other interested parties. The proceeedings and summaries of the regional hearings are available

through ERIC documents. A summary of the results of the regional hearings is provided in this chapter. (See Summary of the Regional Hearings: The Voice of the People provided.)

### *National Indian Education Association Conference*

The Indian Nations At Risk Task Force, in conjunction with the National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE) conducted 32 special issues sessions at the San Diego, CA, National Indian Education Association (NIEA) Conference on October 15th and 16th, 1990. Each of the two days of sessions was attended by Task Force members and NACIE board members. Most of the sessions were repeated to allow more opportunity for the public and American Indian/Alaska Native educators to present comment in small groups on a variety of key issues.

During these issues sessions, the audience was invited to address the specific issue that was the subject of the session in a discussion format moderated by the chair of the session. The discussion format allowed the presentation and development of ideas with comments from a number of individuals as in a committee or council meeting. This format avoided repetition of the same point or idea by several people and allowed many people from all areas of the country to participate in an organized discussion of important issues.

Individuals interested in participating in any of the issues sessions were asked to complete a brief identification card that was used in all of the sessions. The card was used by participants to indicate to the session chair a desire to speak to the issue through a microphone. The chair moderated the discussion by recognizing speakers and limiting the time of each speaker as necessary to ensure broad participation in the discussion. Individuals could speak repeatedly to the topic in dialogues and discussions. The comments of the chair were limited to a very brief introduction of the session. The intent was to allow maximum opportunity for the audience to address the issues and for the Task Force and NACIE members to listen.

All discussion was recorded for the public record by court reporters and made available in transcripts. The proceedings of each of the sessions were prepared, copied, and distributed to all Task Force members, authors and interested parties. Over 550 individuals participated in the 32 issues sessions. These proceedings are also available through the ERIC system.

## Site Visits

While in the field between regional hearing dates, the Task Force staff conducted 33 site visits. These sites were selected based on availability of individuals who were willing to be interviewed and on the vicinity of sites in relation to the regional hearing locations. These site visits produced detailed information on effective practices for use as examples in the development of the Final Report and the Supplemental Volume. Staff conducted informal interviews with over 100 individuals representing parents, school board members, school superintendents, principals, teachers, counselors, students, tribal planners, tribal chairmen, Native spiritual leaders, tribal college presidents, and Native organization directors. Key issues and problems were discussed as well as possible solutions and how best to foster excellence in schools serving American Indians/Alaska Natives.

Staff observed a variety a sites ranging from education cultural centers to public, BIA operated, and Native controlled schools. Specific programs at each site were examined and included: dropout prevention research; dropout prevention through student leadership and career education; alternative schools serving dropouts; drug/substance abuse prevention through teacher and student training; bilingual teacher training; Native language and culture; computer technology in teaching; gifted and talented teacher training; tribal economic development through education; and educational reform planning to increase academic achievement of Native students in 19 dependent rural schools.

Sites were located in a variety of areas across the United States; coast to coast from Quileute Tribal School at La Push, Washington to Robeson County Schools of North Carolina. These sites depicted the diversity as well as the commonality of rural areas like northern Montana's Ft. Peck Community College and Poplar Public Schools to sprawling urban areas like Minnesota's St. Paul/Minneapolis metropolis. A list of these site visits follows.

- Little Big Horn College, Crow Agency, MT on Crow Reservation: *Bilingual Teacher Training Program.*
- Busby School, Lame Deer, MT on Northern Cheyenne Reservation: *Native Contract Elementary School.*
- Dull Knife Memorial College, Lame Deer, MT on Northern Cheyenne Reservation: *Computer Technology in Teaching; and Dropout Prevention Research.*

- Poplar Public School District, Poplar, MT on Ft. Peck Reservation: *Drug/Substance Abuse Prevention through Teacher and Student Training.*
- Ft. Peck Community College, Ft. Peck Agency on Ft. Peck Reservation: *Future Roles of Tribally Controlled Community Colleges.*
- Ft. Peck Tribal Office, Ft. Peck Agency on Ft. Peck Reservation: *Role of Tribes in Education Planning for Tribal Members.*
- Spotted Bull Adolescent Treatment Center, Poplar, MT on Ft. Peck Reservation: *Native Controlled Adolescent Treatment Center.*
- Denver Indian Center, Denver, CO: *Early Childhood Education Program; and Adult Education Program.*
- Council of Energy Resource Tribes (CERT), Denver, CO: *Tribal Economic Development through Energy Resources Management.*
- Native American Rights Fund (NARF), Boulder, CO: *Tribal Education Codes and Roles and Responsibilities of Governments.*
- The Center for Racial and Ethnic Studies, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO: *Philosophical Foundations in Native Education.*
- Quileute Tribal School, La Push, WA on Quileute Reservation: *Native Language and Culture Program.*
- Northwest Indian College, Bellingham, WA: *Alternative High School.*
- Seattle Indian Center, Seattle, WA: *Alternative School for Dropouts; Adult Education for the Homeless; and Life Quest - Youth Leadership Program for At Risk Students.*
- United Indians of All Tribes Foundation, Seattle, WA: *National Education Cultural Center; Early Childhood and Kindergarten Programs; Alternative School for Youth At Risk; and National Native Reader Publication.*
- Seattle Public Schools, Seattle, WA: *Native Urban Education Program.*
- Phoenix Union High School, Phoenix, AZ: *Native Urban Education Program.*
- Phoenix Indian Center, Phoenix, AZ: *Career Education and Dropout Prevention Strategies through Youth Leadership.*
- Salt River Pima-Maricopa Tribal Education Department, Scottsdale, AZ on the Salt River Pima Reservation: *Education Planning for Tribal Members; and Impact Aid Memorandum of Understanding with Mesa Public Schools.*
- Santa Fe Indian School, Santa Fe, NM: *Native Controlled School.*
- Santa Clara Day School, Santa Clara, NM: *BIA Operated Day School.*
- American Indian Graduate Center, Albuquerque, NM: *BIA Contract Scholarships for Graduate Study Program.*
- National Indian Youth Leadership Program, Gallup, NM: *Community Based Youth Leadership Program for At Risk Students.*
- American Indian Research and Development, Inc., Norman, OK: *Native Gifted and Talented Teacher Training Program; and Gifted and Talented Summer and Weekend Enrichment Programs for Native Students.*
- Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma Education Department, Tahlequah, OK: *Tribal Education Department.*
- American Indian Resource Center, Inc., Tahlequah, OK: *Planning for School Reform through Project CRISES - Consortium of Rural Indian Schools for Education Survival.*
- Center School, Minneapolis, MN: *Alternative School for At Risk Native Youth.*
- Heart of the Earth Survival School, Minneapolis, MN: *Native Controlled Elementary and Secondary School Focused on Native Culture and Language.*
- South High School, Minneapolis, MN: *A Native Magnet Public School.*
- Mississippi Band of Choctaws Tribal Education Department, Philadelphia, MS: *Tribal Education Planning.*
- Cherokee Schools, Cherokee, NC: *BIA Operated School.*
- Robeson County Schools, Lumberton, NC: *Native Rural Education Program.*
- Pembroke College, Pembroke, NC: *Recruitment and Retention of Native Students.*

## Commissioned Papers

To respond rapidly to the need for information, analyses, and syntheses in preparing the Final Report of the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force, the Planning and Evaluation Service, in the Office of Planning, Budget and Evaluation, contracted for a series of commissioned papers by experts in the field of American Indian/Alaska Native education. Approximately one-half of the papers were commissioned in September 1990. Commissioning of the remainder of the papers was delayed until December, 1990, due to delays in the fiscal year 1991 budget process.

The commissioned papers addressed topics selected by the Task Force which are holistically linked to one another. Each paper addressed a specific set of topics developed by the Task Force staff. To accurately portray the broadest possible perspectives of Natives on the subject topic, the authors utilized information gathered from public testimony at national and regional Task Force meetings and hearings, documents from the national call-for-papers, existing literature and reports on Native education, and research relevant to the topic. The authors were encouraged to communicate and coordinate with one another. The drafts of the papers were compiled into draft book form and were distributed to all of the authors and the Task Force members. The drafts allowed each individual to read and consider the available work of all of the others in the development of their papers. The drafts also provided the Task Force members with a wealth of information for their use in the development of the Final Report.

This paper, *Indian Nations At Risk Task Force: Listening to the People*, provides an overview of the 20 Commissionsed Papers. A listing of the titles and authors of the 20 commissioned papers follows:

### *Commissioned Papers of the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force*

Current Conditions in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities: Margaret Connell Szasz (Paper 1)

Native American Education at a Turning Point: Current Demographics and Trends: Walter Hillabrant, Mike Romano, and David Stang (Paper 2)

Responsibilities and Roles of Governments and Native People in the Education of American Indians and Alaska Natives: Kirke Kickingbird and Mike Charleston (Paper 3)

Funding and Resources for American Indian and Alaska Native Education: William Brescia (Paper 4)

Native and Non-Native Teachers and Administrators for Elementary and Secondary Schools Serving Native Students: Grayson Noley (Paper 5)

Continuous Evaluation of Native Education Programs for American Indian and Alaska Native Students: Richard Nichols (Paper 6)

Early Childhood Education in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities: Alice Paul (Paper 7)

Dropout Prevention and Special School Support Services for American Indian and Alaska Native Students: Jon Reyhner (Paper 8)

Improving Parental Involvement in Elementary and Secondary Education for American Indian and Alaska Native Students: Robbin Butterfield and Floy Pepper (Paper 9)

Teaching Through Traditions: Incorporating Native Languages and Cultures into Curricula: Linda Skinner (Paper 10)

Strategic Plans for Use of Modern Technology in the Education of American Indian and Alaska Native Students: Paul Berg and Jason Ohler (Paper 11)

Reading and Language Arts Curricula in Elementary and Secondary Education for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Gerald Brown (Paper 12)

Mathematics and Science Curricula in Elementary and Secondary Education for American Indian and Alaska Native Students: Vera Preston (Paper 13)

History and Social Studies Curricula in Elementary and Secondary Schools: Karen Harvey (Paper 14)

Gifted and Talented American Indian and Alaska Native Students: Stuart Tonemah (Paper 15)

American Indian and Alaska Natives with Disabilities: Marilyn J. Johnson (Paper 16)

American Indian and Alaska Native Higher Education: Toward a New Century of Academic Achievement and Cultural Integrity: Bobby Wright (Paper 17)

Tribal Colleges: Underfunded Miracles: Schuyler Houser (Paper 18)

Adult Literacy, Adult Education, and Vocational-Technical Education for American Indians and Alaska Natives: John Hatch (Paper 19)

A Concluding Prospectus on Change and Development for Native Education: David Beaulieu (Paper 20)

## Dissemination of Information

The Task Force determined in their first meeting the importance of availability of information collected through the work of the Task Force. Task

Force staff met with ED's Office of Education Research and Improvement (OERI) and the current contractor, Appalachia Educational Laboratory in Charleston, WV, to discuss the availability of key Task Force documents through the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. Plans were made to submit the following key documents of the Task Force to the ERIC system: the Final Report; the commissioned papers of the Supplemental Volume; proceedings and summaries for each regional hearing; proceedings for each business meeting; and summaries of the 32 issue sessions held in San Diego during the 1990 Annual Conference of NIEA. Individuals may request information on obtaining access to these documents by calling ERIC/Cress on a toll-free number 1-800-624-9120 (in WV-1-800-344-6646) or writing to ERIC/Cress, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, P.O Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325.

The Task Force staff also developed a dissemination plan to distribute 10,00 copies of the Final Report and 1,000 copies of the commissioned papers of the Supplemental Volume. The Dissemination Plan identified Federal Agencies, Tribal Education Program Officials, Local Education Program Officials, Postsecondary Education Program Officials; State Education Program Officials; Parental and Community Elected and Appointed Officials; Tribal Elected and Appointed Officials; State Elected and Appointed Officials; Federal Elected and Appointed Officials; Educational Organizations; and the Media.

The Task Force staff also compiled a mailing list of individuals requesting a copy of the Final Report and Supplemental Volume through correspondence or sign-up sheets distributed at the Task Force business meetings, regional hearings, and issue sessions.

## Summary of the Regional Hearings: The Voice of the People

Many issues and recommendations were brought before the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force during regional hearings which were held on July 16, 1990, in Juneau, AK; August 20, 1990, in Billings, MT; September 5, 1990, in Seattle, WA; September 12, 1990, in Phoenix AZ; September 17-18, 1990 in Oklahoma City, OK; September 21, 1990, in St. Paul, MN; and October 2, 1990, in Cherokee, NC. The following section summarizes the views expressed by the public in the hearings. Presentation of issues are listed in order according to the frequency on which individuals provided comments in their testimony.

### *Federal Funding of Native Education*

Chronic underfunding of all Native education programs must come to an end. Education is a basic part of treaty rights and obligations. Gradual decreases in federal funding for Native education programs are resulting in cuts in essential and desperately needed services. These programs should be exempt from Gramm-Rudman budget cuts.

The quality of Native education at the local level is directly dependent on the levels of federal ED and BIA funding. Local schools cannot effectively address critical problems such as high dropout rates and low academic success without significant increases in federal assistance. Funding for direct educational services, support services, facilities, and libraries is significantly lower for Native students than for their non-Native counterparts.

- A full review of the ISEP formula is necessary since it currently funds programs at one-third less per pupil than public schools.
- BIA education programs should be forward funded to eliminate the tremendously adverse impact of current-year funding.
- Tribal schools should receive direct federal funding for JOM and school lunch programs without the imposition of state and local administration and assessed overhead costs.
- BIA grant and contract schools seriously lack funds for facilities improvement and consequently must operate their programs out of temporary facilities that are often little more than shanties with numerous violations of health and safety codes. Tribes should be allowed to design, finance, and construct their own school buildings and renovation projects with BIA-guaranteed long-term leases to back up construction loans.
- Additional funds must be made available to establish adequate school and community libraries, to address the problem of prohibitively high transportation costs for students on large reservations, and to provide appropriate, well equipped vocational programs.

Funding for Native education programs must be stabilized so that long-range planning can establish the program and staff continuity which are

essential to helping Native American youth overcome barriers and achieve academic success.

The federal government should hold public schools accountable for their use of Impact Aid funds. Existing regulations that mandate Native parent and community input must be enforced through sign-off authority. Performance standards should be established for districts serving Native students. When schools do not comply with the regulations or fail to meet performance standards, funds should be withheld and assigned to parents so they might apply them to the education site of their choice.

Regulations should be simplified so that less red-tape and fewer restrictions hamper effective delivery of services.

## *Teachers and Teacher Training*

American Indian and Alaska Native teachers, administrators, counselors, and specialists are needed in schools at all levels and in all areas because Native staff serve as role models for Native students and thus help increase self-esteem. In general, Native staff are more sensitive to the cultural and learning styles of Native students because they share a common cultural and language background.

We must establish targeted incentive and support programs to attract American Indian and Alaska Native young people into the education profession. Increasing the number of Native graduates who return to their own communities to teach would help reduce the high teacher turnover rates in remote locations.

Both Native and non-Native teachers across the country should be required to complete a course in Native history, culture, languages, and educational needs as a part of pre-service training. This would increase their cultural sensitivity and recognition of Native American contributions to the country.

Public schools, especially those serving significant numbers of Native students, should fully utilize in-service days, workshops, and other staff development programs to improve staff ability to effectively teach Native students.

Non-Native teachers who go into Native communities should receive the same kind of language and cultural orientation that Peace Corps volunteers receive before they are posted. Their training should prepare them to recognize the different learning styles of Native students and learn how to provide appropriate instruction (including use of more experiential, participatory, and cooperative learning strategies).

Alternative certification requirements must be instituted to allow tribal Elders and community members with cultural expertise to participate in the instruction of Native children.

## *Native Parent & Community Participation and Self-Determination*

Parents are still not part of the system despite efforts to increase their involvement. They know things must change, but they lack understanding of the system and how to influence it. They are angry, frustrated, and alienated.

- Schools in Native communities should have Native staff to interact with Native parents and create a comfort level that encourages their participation. These schools should have open classrooms where parents are welcome to come any time to observe and participate, and should establish a place where parents can congregate. Schools should offer extended building hours, parent-child library programs, and other family-based programs and services.
- Schools need to be accountable to the communities they serve. They need to reach out by informing and reporting educational realities to their communities and seeking their input.
- Teachers must make it their business to get to know parents, share information with them, and enlist their involvement with the school.
- Parents need training to become active partners in the educational process and advocates with the schools for their own children. Schools should offer this kind of training as well as parenting classes with provisions for transportation and child care services.

Native parents need to be empowered through Native-controlled schools where there is respect for Native values and cultural ways.

- Native communities must be the producers of Native education materials that reflect the language and culture of the local area.
- A Native model of education is a multigenerational model. Schools should welcome the meaningful involvement of Elders in Native education.

The old definition of "getting parents to do what we tell them" must be exchanged for partnerships and shared decision-making.

- In public schools with significant numbers of Native students, participative management that includes Native parents and community members will foster more community awareness of and interest in education.
- There are seldom any Native school board members. We need mandated school board representation for Native people in public schools where there are large percentages (20 percent and up) of Native Americans.
- Parents who serve on school boards need to have training to better understand their roles and more effectively fulfill their responsibilities.

Natives need to be specifically included in national educational reform.

All BIA personnel, nationally and locally, should be required to receive tribal and community recommendations regarding the education programs they manage.

## *Integration of Native Language and Culture*

The preservation of Native languages is of primary importance to the survival of our cultures and to the self-esteem of Native children, which leads to higher academic achievement.

- Extensive curriculum development and training of Native speakers as teachers is necessary to restore Native language capacity. The federal government should initiate a monumental extra effort in this area to compensate for the monumental effort that was expended to eradicate Native languages over the past decades.
- Foreign language requirements in Native schools discredit the importance of Native language. Students should be encouraged, or at least permitted, to study their ancestral language, as well as modern Western European languages, for high school credit and to meet college entrance requirements.

The study of Native American language, law, history, culture, art, and philosophy should be required of students of Native heritage to build pride, confidence, and understanding.

- Where Natives are the majority, efforts should be made to assure that teaching and learning is not only about the culture, but of the culture. More research should be funded to identify and apply culturally relevant pedagogy.
- Culturally appropriate instructional strategies are based on a multi-generational approach that asks students to focus on their own culture, work collaboratively in small groups, seek the wisdom of their Elders, learn from the environment and experience, and demonstrate their learnings from the work they actually produce.
- Native American studies need to be infused into all areas of academic study: art, history, natural sciences, literature, etc.
- Cultural curriculum should be localized to reflect the historical experience, culture, and values of the local and regional Native communities.

Public school curricula for Natives and non-Natives must reflect accurate and balanced instruction in the history and culture of American Indians/Alaska Natives. We need to hear about Native contributions and successes. Very few people know that Native people helped write the Constitution or that a Native was Vice President of this country. More balanced curricula would help non-Native students overcome their unfamiliarity with American Indians/Alaska Natives and increase general respect for their contributions to this country.

Textbook vendors must be firmly persuaded to publish revised texts that do real justice to the contributions of Natives and other minority groups. Paragraphs and sidebars inserted here and there are not an adequate response to this demand.

At the postsecondary level there is a paucity of multicultural and crosscultural programs. Even where courses are offered, "culturally relevant curriculum" is poorly defined and articulated.

More regional Native heritage, cultural and historical societies, and learning centers should be established to help revitalize the values and traditions of Native families and communities, as a way of minimizing social dysfunction.

## *Postsecondary Education — Financial Aid*

In every region inadequate financial aid is viewed as the major reason that Native students leave higher education. Amounts that are currently available do not begin to cover the actual tuition and living costs. Non-traditional older students are especially in need of increased financial aid to meet

family responsibilities and cover the cost of off-campus housing and daycare for their children.

- Tribal grants should be considered "sovereignty awards" and should stand apart from the calculation of eligibility for other financial aid.
- Tuition waivers for American Indians/Alaska Natives should be increased at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels.
- The "property as an asset" statement should be removed from financial aid qualification calculations since tribal property cannot be sold and its inclusion misrepresents the resources available to grant applicants.
- Native students need increased access to scholarships, fellowships, work-study programs, graduate assistantships, employment opportunities, and internships.
- There must be an increased financial base of support for Native students at sophomore through graduate levels. Major portions of financial aid are now dispersed to first-year students who have the highest attrition rate.
- Students who wish to attend postsecondary vocational training programs rather than a college or university should have equal access to financial aid.

The timing of disbursement for BIA and PELL grants is typically at least three weeks behind registration for Fall semester. Tribal contributions are often inadequate to fully cover fees. This means that students have no money for books (and therefore immediately fall behind in class) or for general living expenses (which creates discouraging personal hardships).

- BIA and PELL grants must be disbursed prior to or not later than Fall registration.
- Tribes should be given responsibility for the administration and disbursement of PELL and BIA grants.
- Book vouchers should be made available at registration to eligible Native students awaiting financial aid, so that they do not have to wait several weeks into the term to purchase textbooks.
- Lack of reliable transportation, especially in rural areas, can become a major barrier to Native students attending college. Funds should be made available to assist colleges serving large numbers of rural Native students in addressing this problem.
- Native students from low income families who attend college away from home are especially penalized by having to move out of dorms during breaks when they also cannot afford to travel home. They should be provided with the same inter-term access to dormitory facilities as are foreign students.

## *Postsecondary Readiness, Recruitment and Persistence*

Unacceptable preparedness for college is a betrayal of American Indian and Alaska Native youth who enter college with inadequate basic language, math, and study skills and are unable to complete their freshman year.

- Identifying and nurturing potential college-bound students should begin in elementary school or at least at the middle school level.
- There must be closer coordination between all levels of education to ensure that every effort is being made to help students finish high school and continue their education.
- Special college preparation and tutorial services need to be provided to Native students at the secondary level.

Natives are underrepresented in higher education in proportion to the general population. Colleges and universities should implement more aggressive recruitment programs to increase the number of Native students who attend college.

- Native high school students must have access to better college counseling. Native schools need to more actively inform themselves and their students about college opportunities. Public school counselors need training to redress their tendency to think minimally about the college potential of Native students.
- There should be greater coordination between high schools and postsecondary institutions that serve large numbers of Native American students.
- Summer on-campus programs like Upward Bound should be more widely available.
- College admissions officers should consider teacher recommendations of Native

applicants as well as test scores in determining acceptance.

The failure rate of Native students in postsecondary institutions is greater than that of any other ethnic group. To reduce college attrition and increase persistence, support services need to be provided to address the social and cultural needs of Native students who often have had limited or no exposure to a college environment.

- College campuses with large concentrations of Native students should develop Native Learning Centers with counseling and tutorial support systems. These Centers should host cultural and social events and also serve as a place where Native students can gather informally and find a support network.
- Currently enrolled Native college students in good standing could be selected and trained to serve as positive peer mentors and "retention specialists" for incoming Native students.
- Postsecondary institutions need to provide Native American students with better career counseling and mentoring programs to increase graduation rates and raise employment aspirations.

## *Tribal Colleges*

Tribally-controlled community colleges are the pride of the Native people. They are currently struggling to serve increasing numbers of students. They need increased support because of the essential role they play in preparing students for entry or return to four-year colleges and universities, or for employment in the Native community.

- Congress needs to fulfill its commitment to tribal community colleges by providing funding of $5,820 for each student.
- Additional funding is urgently needed for facilities renovation and construction.
- At least six more tribal community colleges should be established in states like Oklahoma, California, and New Mexico, which have large Native populations.

## *Other Postsecondary Concerns*

Institutions of higher education must address the challenges of recruitment and retention of minority faculty and staff. Native faculty are often overextended as minority representatives and are not rewarded for necessary work such as counseling Native students, obtaining funding for Native programs, and researching Native topics.

In many rural Native reservations and villages the rate of high school graduates who stay in or return to the community is extremely high. Unemployment is a major problem. Native students should not be taught to feel that pursuing postsecondary vocational education rather than college means failure.

Jobs in Native communities (and elsewhere) often require experience as well as education. Internship programs are needed for college juniors, seniors and graduate students to help them prepare for successful post-graduation employment. Internships could be established in partnership with tribes and Native organizations.

## *Support Services for At-Risk Native Youth*

Many of our children who come from dysfunctional homes are in emotional pain and anger. They end up being suspended, expelled from school, and "thrown away." They are likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, commit suicide, develop emotional problems, or become teenage parents. Support services are necessary to provide a safety net for these children.

- The system and teachers must no longer deliver the standard curriculum without acknowledging that at-risk Native students come to school ill-prepared to learn because they are coming from dysfunctional families. Teachers, administrators, and support staff need training to recognize cries for help.
- Support must be made available to strengthen Native families and help them resolve their problems. For the child whose parents are not supportive, mentoring relationships with other adults may provide an answer.
- Native counselors are needed at all elementary, middle, and senior high school levels to provide culturally sensitive support services.
- Identification and intervention programs should begin early and include counseling on an individual and group basis; mentoring programs should include teacher, peer, and community resources.
- Special efforts should be targeted at the middle-school-age student since this is a critical and vulnerable time when many students are making key life decisions.

More funding is needed for culturally-appropriate substance abuse prevention and dependency programs targeting Native youth. Such programs are essential to guaranteeing safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools.

- These programs must be community based and tribally controlled and must advocate a return to traditional values and wisdom.
- Tribal and community leaders must provide the leadership in such programs to assure their success, since substance abuse problems are a part of the social and economic fabric of many reservations and Native communities.
- These programs must include parents, extended families, and Elders.

Serious and immediate attention must be focused on addressing the alarming increase in incidence of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and Fetal Alcohol Effect (FAE) children.

Resources are needed to educate young people to avoid teen pregnancy. Failing that, adequate day care must be made available to teen parents to enable them to complete their education.

Comprehensive wellness and health education programs must be provided to address problems that may become barriers to academic success. These programs must be integrated into the curriculum in grades preschool through 12 rather than being offered only as a semester course in high school.

## *Curriculum and Educational Programs*

Native students should have greater access to enriched programs rather than just remedial programs.

- Improved mathematics and science programs for Native Americans are crucial to adequately preparing young people for jobs in the future. These subjects must be taught in enriched, interesting, and creative ways that motivate children. The traditional mathematics and science instructional methods used in the present American education "factory" system have failed to motivate Native and non-Native students. Instruction should include culturally relevant materials and hands-on experiences. The instruction needs to "come alive" and use the available modern technology at the earliest grade levels. Effective programs would also offer supplemental summer programs and increased support services, including mentoring.
- Natives are underrepresented in Gifted and Talented programs, and many bright students need these opportunities to enhance their skills. The two Indian Gifted and Talented Centers mandated in PL 100-297 should be funded and implemented.
- Dynamic and strong Native youth leadership programs and opportunities must be developed and implemented in grades K through 12. The federal government should establish a grant program in this area which would be matched by state, local, and/or tribal funds.

Effective tutorial programs should be established to provide one-on-one assistance to help bring Native students up to grade level in basic skill areas.

Teachers can help Native children improve their reading skills by basing instruction on materials and subjects of interest to the child. Reading skills must be emphasized in elementary levels because of the increasingly debilitating impact that poor skills have on children as they progress through school.

There is a critical need for good vocational education programs for American Indians/Alaska Natives. Native schools need to plan their curriculum in concert with tribal economic development efforts to prepare youth to participate immediately in the reservation economy.

Native schools should make increased use of "effective schooling" practices.

## *Roles of Federal, State, and Tribal Governments*

The federal trust responsibility for Native education must be maintained and strengthened. The Task Force should make a clear statement that all issues in Native education are tied in a larger sense to abrogation of treaty rights.

The Office of Indian Education, currently under the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, should be restored to its original status directly under the U.S. Secretary of Education. Within this office all programs (early childhood through postsecondary) that provide Native education services should be reorganized under one cohesive policy and administrative banner.

For the first time in ten years the ED Office of Indian Education and the BIA Office of Indian Education Programs have directors, not "acting directors." The lack of consistent administration

in these critical positions for this length of time has contributed greatly to the problems in Native education because no consistent and strong direction or attention was given to the many programs within these Departments.

- Timely dissemination of information from the BIA and ED to tribes regarding policy changes, public hearings, technical assistance, and legislation is very poor.
- BIA and ED technical assistance in Native education is sorely lacking and desperately needed.
- ED and the BIA must strengthen their collaborative efforts. One critically important area should be the establishment of a comprehensive national and state-by-state database on Native education.

The BIA is universally regarded by tribes and Congress as an ineffective, poorly managed and frequently hostile player in the Native education community, yet Native educators and tribes are wary of tampering with the bureaucracy because of the trust relationship that BIA represents.

- Information provided concerning plans to reorganize the BIA Office of Indian Education Programs (OIEP) has been inadequate for thorough evaluation.
- Closure of area offices is opposed in some regions because it would abolish important and accessible support services.
- BIA schools do not allow enough local involvement in selecting teachers, and they require excessive documentation and paperwork on the part of school administrators.

A national Native accreditation agency should be established as an entity separate from the current state and regional systems. This would assure that Native schools are encouraged and allowed to offer culturally relevant appropriate programs as determined by local Native communities.

The planning for the White House Conference on Indian Education has been very slow and poorly executed. It cannot be successful unless it is given the priority that the conference and the Native people deserve.

States must legislatively assure that local education agencies institutionalize their commitments to Native education.

- The "New Federalism" suggests that states may play a greater role in assuming responsibility for Native education, yet many states continue to be unresponsive to the needs of Natives. Tribes are unwilling to allow a delegation of the federal trust responsibility to the states. But, tribes expect states to recognize and respect their tribal sovereignty, jurisdiction, and legal status.
- There is a need for greater coordination of efforts between states and tribes.
- Centers for Native education should be established at the state level to coordinate Native education resources and technical assistance.

Tribal communities need to come to the aid of tribal children. Their education must be designed by the tribes from start to finish. The federal government's role must be to support and provide the resources to tribal governments for establishing their own tribal education departments and education codes to serve their own children.

Improved relations are needed between state departments, local school boards, and tribal governments. Some tribal groups have taken steps in this direction by creating and gaining signatures for joint interagency memoranda of understanding among all of these groups.

## *Prejudice and Racism*

American Indians/Alaska Natives are experiencing racism on both personal and institutional levels.

- Native students as a group are frequently categorized and treated as remedial students and therefore fail because of negative teacher expectations.
- When Native students are scattered and isolated in inner-city and suburban schools, they feel they are misfits. If they acknowledge themselves as Natives they are often subjected to taunts and racial slurs which make them feel threatened and ashamed. If they defend themselves against verbal and physical harassment, they are suspended and expelled. Alienation is a key contributing factor in the high dropout rates.
- Prejudicial attitudes of administrators and teachers still prevail and prevent schools and districts from integrating Native language and culture into the curriculum, even when excellent materials and resources are available.
- Schools and districts (especially those that are small and rural) often constitute power bases in which there is active resistance to

shared decision-making with Native parents and tribes.

Racism, as reflected in media coverage of Native issues, feeds an undercurrent of negative attitudes in communities with Native populations and across the country.

Meaningful workshops must be widely offered to non-Native teachers and administrators in order to overcome prejudicial attitudes by raising cultural awareness and appreciation of Native history, literature, language, culture, and spiritual values.

There must be an end to the continued use of Native people as mascots, official symbols, emblems, and namesakes for school (and professional) athletic teams, newspapers, yearbooks, and so forth. Such depiction is offensive, demeaning, and degrading and perpetuates negative racial stereotypes.

## *Standards and Testing*

Native parents and communities must stop thinking of success as reduced dropout rates and fewer suspensions and start thinking of success as high graduation rates and postsecondary enrollment.

Excellence as well as equity must be assured for Native students. Teachers must hold high expectations for Native students whom they teach and provide a variety of opportunities for successful achievement. The same standards and values should be applied to everyone.

Native students should be educated in "least restrictive environments," but not by pulling them out and treating them as problems.

There is a need to "Nativeize" Native education at all levels; this includes philosophy, textbooks, methods, content, and especially standards. An initiative should be started through the Native Education Centers to establish comprehensive Native education standards that could guide both BIA and ED programs.

Native students are not adequately evaluated by standardized tests, which tend to be biased toward middle-class, Euro-American culture. We need to develop measures of Native student aptitudes and abilities that are unbiased and sensitive to their psycholinguistic and cultural differences.

## *Early Childhood Education*

Preschool programs, such as Head Start and Home Start, must be made available to all eligible American Indian/Alaska Native children. Early childhood education clearly contributes to later school success.

- Eligibility should extend to two years minimum. One year is not enough to adequately meet the goals of school readiness.
- Parent income level eligibility requirements should be eliminated since they serve as a disincentive to parents who want to improve their own education and employment but don't want their children to lose Head Start benefits.
- Funding for programs should not be restrictive, based on poverty level or the existence of a BIA school, but should be based on the Native community needs.

Programs should be family-based and include parent training and involvement components. They should also incorporate culturally relevant curriculum and include health and nutrition education.

Preschool programs must be readily available to rural populations, be well-staffed with well-paid trained professionals, have generous budgets for equipment, and be flexible to allow for Native community and parental involvement.

It is particularly important that teenage Native parents receive training in parenting skills. Prenatal care should be provided to young parents, and health screening should be provided for preschool children.

Native Head Start programs should include provision for transportation to make these services more accessible, especially in isolated rural areas.

## *Urban and Public School Education*

Desegregation has been harmful to Native education and has hurt Native students by scattering and isolating them from their peers and making it costly and difficult to provide effective cultural programs and support services. *Brown v Board of Education* has been a benign weapon with a disastrous impact on Native American students.

- When the impact of these policies can be demonstrated to be negative, waivers and other alternatives must be allowed to reverse this impact.
- American Indians/Alaska Natives are a tribal people; Native students learn best when there is a "critical mass" together in one site. Therefore, urban Native children should be brought together in schools of choice, such as Native magnet schools.

Most Native students are now being educated in public schools. Yet public education systems are

structured in ways that are counterproductive to the education needs of Native students.

- Unions and collective bargaining mitigate against hiring and retaining Native educators.
- Native programs are continually underfunded and marginal.
- It is difficult, if not impossible, to get Native curriculum into schools because teachers and administrators refuse to use materials that are developed outside the system.

Until public schools are restructured to adequately meet the needs of Native students, there must be continued local, state, and federal support for effective Native alternative schools.

As a result of assimilation, Native young people are increasingly assuming the profile of other disadvantaged inner-city youth. There is escalating gang activity, violence, and use of weapons at younger and younger ages. Native communities must develop intervention and respite strategies to reverse this trend and to guarantee safe passage for innocent young people to and from school.

## *Adult Basic Education (ABE)*

As a result of high dropout rates and high unemployment rates, some of the most severe needs in Native education are for adult services. Studies show that Native GED graduates attend college at equal or greater rates than high school graduates. Native ABE needs more prominence and more funding; it should not always be an add-on.

Native ABE needs to be staffed with culturally sensitive teachers and offer culturally relevant content. The most critical success factor for these programs is the degree to which they reflect the goals, needs, and values of the adults they serve.

Native ABE programs should no longer be awarded on competitive grant bases. Funding must be stabilized to assure continuation of services. For the same reason, Native ABE program staff should have full-time positions and should receive benefits.

Native ABE programs need to be offered in Native communities and should provide transportation and child care to increase their accessibility.

Counseling and support services should be attached to ABE/GED programs to help students make life-decisions and select and complete employability programs.

## *Special Education, Chapter 1, and Other Special Services*

Native students are overidentified for special education services and Chapter 1. Parents are ill-equipped to challenge school diagnoses and advocate for their own children. This issue needs to be better documented on a national basis. Advocacy programs need to be established to support parents and assure that their children's needs are accurately identified and served.

Students who require special and remedial services must be assured access to free, appropriate education and the necessary support services.

There is a great need for more special education teachers for Native children with disabilities. Very few Native teachers have this preparation.

Speech therapists who work with Native children need to be trained to recognize local and regional dialects of Native English and the influence of Native languages so that Native children are not so often mistakenly referred for speech therapy.

## *Data Collection and Research*

A national database on Native education is sorely lacking and must be established. The federal government must take the initiative in funding the National Center for Education Statistics to provide this information. The Indian Health Service data system should be used as a model.

States must be encouraged to establish their own databases to regularly collect the information that will inform their own programs and support national data collection efforts.

"Data equals power." Local education agencies (LEAs) are more responsive when Native leaders can present data to support their concerns about the academic status, performance outcomes, and disciplinary experience of Native students in their systems.

- BIA and ED funding should be made available to help schools that serve large numbers of Native students establish and maintain comprehensive computer records, in order to improve tracking and bring Native education closer to the level of non-Native education.
- LEA administrators involved in data collection for a dropout study in Montana found the effort well worth their time because of the useful information it provided them about their own districts and schools.

Native college and graduate students should be involved in research and data collection efforts.

Increased funds should be made available to support other research in critical areas of Native education.

## *Recommendations for the Final Report*

American Indian/Alaska Native people feel that the problems in Native education have been well defined and redefined. They are very tired of repeating the process of testifying before national hearings which identify problems and result in recommendations that only end up gathering dust on a shelf. There is nationwide concern that this effort must lead to changes that will make a difference.

- The final report should stress a sense of urgency in carrying out recommendations.
- The Task Force must therefore be very concrete as it makes its recommendations. The problems are well known; therefore the report must deal in specific *actions* and *solutions* which lead to clearly defined, measurable *outcomes*.
- The final report must establish timelines (at three, five, and ten years) for key milestones.